



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 9, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Lisa M. Hansknecht, Director, Office of State and Federal Relations

SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Update

State Update

Parent Empowerment Education Reform Package

Senate Republicans introduced a series of bills referred to as the Parent Empowerment Education Reform package to implement portions of the Governor's April Education Message. Senate Bills 618 through 624 were introduced by Senators Pavlov, Colbeck, Robertson, Hansen, Emmons, Emmons, and Pavlov, respectively.

The topics of the bills range from expanding schools of choice statewide to expansion of dual enrollment opportunities and certain charter schools. Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff are reviewing the bills currently. The Senate Education Committee is expected to take testimony and then move on these and other bills related to the Governor's message and the Senate's proposals this fall.

Copies of the bills have been forwarded to the Board members and further information will be provided as it becomes available.

Joint House/Senate K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee meetings

Two hearings have been scheduled for next week jointly by the House and Senate K-12 Appropriations Subcommittees.

The first will be held on September 15, 2011, at 8:00 am in the House Appropriations Room of the Capitol Building. The agenda is public testimony on the topic of alternative high schools. This is likely testimony from school districts that run alternative high schools as a chance to showcase successes and identify obstacles to be overcome.

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
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The second hearing is scheduled for September 20, 2011 at 8:00 am in the House Appropriations Room of the Capitol Building. This second hearing's agenda is public testimony on the topic of Performance-Based School Funding. This is likely testimony in response to the Governor's call for performance based funding in his April Education message.

House Bipartisan Workgroup on Education

The House's bipartisan workgroup continued meeting with discussions most recently on the use of technology in education. Over the summer the members also discussed and heard testimony about schools with balanced calendar initiatives to funding issues and issues about flexibility to parental involvement. The workgroup is expected to continue its work. Meetings continue on Wednesdays, most lately beginning at 2 pm.

Federal Update

Congress has been at recess since the last SBE meeting.

Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

The new Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction often referred to as the Super Committee has begun its organization and work. The 12-member panel is charged with finding an additional \$1.5 trillion in debt savings over a ten-year period. The Committee was created by the Budget Control Act of 2011 as part of the negotiated agreement to increase the debt limit. Its work is expected to proceed promptly.

As you are in contact with the Michigan Congressional Delegation, you may wish to note that there is a push by education advocacy groups to look beyond the discretionary spending programs to include mandatory spending as well as revenues and revenue "loopholes." In other words, the education advocates believe that all funds should be reviewed by the Committee and not just those viewed as discretionary which often hit education harder proportionally.

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

As a follow-up to the last legislative report, the application was released from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge fund grant in late August. Further information on the application is available online at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>. Per Governor Snyder, Michigan will be applying for this grant. At this point, no legislation is believed necessary related to this.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these or other legislative issues, please feel free to contact me at 517-241-4993.